

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS**

**Statutory power to a commission looking the welfare of small and marginal farmers**

3192. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of policy initiative measures that have been taken or proposed to be taken to alleviate the sufferings of the farmers, particularly the small and marginal ones;

(b) whether his Ministry has issued statutory powers, to any commission so that they take decisions for arranging funds and providing the funds to the needy and poor farmers against nominal interest rates; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Government has taken a number of initiatives to alleviate the sufferings of the farmers including small and marginal farmers. These, *inter-alia*, include the announcement of a credit policy in the year 2004 to double the flow of credit to the agriculture sector in three years. From Kharif 2006-2007, farmers are being provided crop loan up to Rs. 3 lakh at 7% rate of interest. Keeping in view the importance of flow of credit to agriculture, in particular to the smaller borrowers who may not have the necessary assets as collateral, the banks have been advised to waive margin/security requirements for agricultural loans up to Rs. 50000/-. The Government also announced a package for revival of cooperative credit structure. A major effort has been initiated for diversification of agriculture. National Horticulture Mission has been launched since the year 2005 for ensuring end-to-end approach with backward and forward linkages covering research, post harvest management, processing and marketing. Other initiatives taken by Government include expanding the area under irrigation, improved water management with watershed development and rain harvesting and establishment of National Rain-fed Area Authority. National Agricultural Insurance Scheme is being implemented with the objective of protecting the farmers against the crop losses occurring on account of natural calamities.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Government has taken adequate steps to provide funds to the needy and poor farmers at comparatively lower interest rates.

### Production of onion

†3193. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of onion in the kharif season in 2006-07 was more than that of kharif season of previous year;

(b) if so, the facts thereof alongwith the details of production of onion during both of the said years, separately;

(c) whether it is also a fact that more quantity of onion was exported this year as compared to the previous year from the country; and

(d) if so, the quantity of exported onion till January, 2007 and to what extent it is lesser or more than the previous year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The production of onion in the kharif season in the year 2006-07 was more about 13% compared to previous year. Onion production during kharif was more mainly in the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States. However, it was less in Gujarat, M.P. and Orissa States. State-wise estimates on the area and production during kharif, late kharif and rabi season in the year 2006-07 in comparison to previous year are given in Statement (See below).

(c) Yes, Sir. A significant increase in onion exports was recorded during 2006-07 as compared to previous year.

(d) During the year 2006-07 upto 26.2.2007, NAFED and other State Trading Enterprises (STEs) put together have exported/issued NOCs for a quantity of 10,43,072 mts. of onion as against a quantity of 6,99,663 mts exported upto 28.2.2006 which is more by 3,43,409 mts. showing an increase of about 49%.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi